

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

612685

## INFORMATION REPORT

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

SECRET - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

COUNTRY USSR

REPORT

SUBJECT Economic, Sociological, and Military Information on the USSR

DATE DISTR. 2 September 1954

NO. OF PAGES 3

DATE OF INFO.

REQUIREMENT NO. RD

PLACE ACQUIRED

REFERENCES

This is UNEVALUATED

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.  
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.  
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

BY CABLE

1. Passenger trains in the USSR have three classes of accommodations. The first class is used almost exclusively by government officials. In October 1953, there were five trains running between Odessa and Moscow, four regular and one express. Regular trains took 42 hours and 10 minutes between Odessa and Moscow; the express train took 36 hours. The first-class fare on a regular train is 500 rubles. Informant went from Odessa to Moscow on a regular train, paying 100 rubles third-class fare and 35 rubles (sic: probably 3.5) for a light lunch. The use of a pillow and a blanket on the train cost ten rubles.

2. People in the USSR are permitted to own or lease old, run-down houses.<sup>1</sup>

3. Commodity prices in Odessa in November 1953 were as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Price (in rubles)</u>
Pork	kg	12
Cow or ox		300 - 500
Cigarettes	pack of 10	1
Lowest-grade vodka	1/2 liter	3
Soup and one dish in restaurant		9
Pobeda wrist watch		350 - 400

In October 1953, there was no meat or bread rationing in Moscow or Odessa.

4. Informant knows of no privately-owned stores, shops, or stalls in the USSR.

SECRET - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

SECRET - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

25X1

-2-

5. In Moscow and Odessa, movie prices vary; the highest price of admission is five rubles.
6. Despite a penalty of 10 years or more in jail if offenders are caught, there is a black market in foreign currency and commodities in Odessa. In October 1953, the black market exchange rate of U.S. dollars and rubles was one to 20. In November 1953, informant purchased one English pound for 50 rubles on the Odessa black market through a friend.
7. The Soviets considered the new short rifle with improved glass (sic: telescopic sight?) their greatest invention in the small arms field.
8. Conscription laws of the USSR are very complicated and vary with occupational groups. Informant, as a seaman, was required to take only three months of Army training at the age of 20 (sic: informant is 19 years old.). Soviet youths usually begin their military service at 20, although they often take basic training earlier. Those inducted into the Navy must serve five years; in the Army, two to two and a half years. Draft calls are issued three times yearly.
9. Beginning in the first year of middle school, students receive three hours of military drill weekly with rifles (no firing pins) and bayonets. Students must read all books by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin and attend political meetings presided over by their teachers.
10. Each city in the USSR maintains a club open to all men and women, containing the latest arms and equipment, from pistols to tanks. Literature and instructors are provided. Students must go to the clubs regularly.
11. Soviet citizens are not allowed to own or carry arms of any kind.<sup>2</sup> There is a three-year jail sentence for the illegal possession of a knife with more than a six-inch blade. The possession of such a knife for one's work requires a license and the name of the owner inscribed on the blade.
12. Participants in fighting or disturbances on streets are subject to a three-year jail sentence without investigation or trial. Informant heard and read of extensive assault, robbery, and burglary in Odessa. Country people are afraid to go out at night.
13.
14. Informant never listened to the Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation, or Radio Free Europe because it was too dangerous, but he was aware of their existence.
15. Informant feels that the following anecdote is representative of the present situation in the USSR: 30 years ago when a man working in the woods met a stranger, it was cause for pleasure, conversation, and an invitation to a meal. At present, meeting a stranger in the woods is cause for alarm, fear, and suspicion, with no talk and no invitation.

25X1

Comments

25X1

1. Soviets are also permitted to build new homes and can obtain bank loans for this purpose.
2. Soviet citizens can own hunting rifles if properly licensed.

SECRET - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY

**Page Denied**